

**Draft Summary of the Environmental Work Group Meeting  
Oroville Facilities Relicensing (FERC Project No. 2100)  
January 29, 2002**

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) hosted the Environmental Work Group meeting on January 29, 2002 in Oroville.

A summary of the discussions, decisions made, and action items is provided below. This summary is not intended to be a transcript, analysis of the meeting, or to indicate agreement or disagreement with any of the items summarized, except where expressly stated. The intent is to present an informational summary for interested parties who could not attend the meeting. The following documents are provided

Attachment 1 Meeting Agenda  
Attachment 2 Meeting Attendees  
Attachment 3 Flip Chart Notes

### **Introduction**

Attendees were welcomed to the Environmental Work Group meeting and objectives were discussed. The meeting agenda and list of meeting attendees with their affiliations are appended to this summary as Attachments 1 and 2, respectively. Flip chart notes taken during the meeting are included as Attachment 3.

### **November 28, 2001 Meeting Summary & Action Items**

A summary of the November 28, 2001 Environmental Work Group meeting is posted on the project web site. Action items from that meeting as well as carryover items from the previous Work Group meetings related to geographic scope language and conceptual framework were discussed as follows:

#### *Geographic Scope Language*

Wayne Dyok with the consulting team discussed some of the options that had previously been suggested for addition to the Geographic Scope Language. The language distributed to participants at a previous Work Group meeting was projected on the screen for all to review. A discussion by participants resulted in the following language:

“Study plans approved by the Environmental Work Group define the limits of the study area. If initial study results indicate that the study area should be expanded or contracted, the Environmental Work Group will discuss the basis for change and revise the study area as appropriate”.

The Environmental Work Group agreed by consensus that this language will go at the end of Section 4 for all Environmental study plans. The participants also agreed that the following language would be added to Section 5 of all Environmental study plans:

“If initial study results indicate that the methods and tasks should be modified, the Environmental Work Group will discuss the basis for change and revise the study plans as appropriate.”

#### *Conceptual Framework*

Wayne Dyok explained that the conceptual framework was being developed through the fisheries study plans and asked the participants to defer discussion of this until the fisheries study plans are discussed at a future Environmental Work Group meeting. Steve Ford added that he expected the fisheries focused subgroup, consisting primarily of fisheries agency and DWR staff, to have some draft study plans to show the Environmental Work Group in February.

#### *Action Items*

The Facilitator reviewed the status of action items from the last meeting as follows:

**Action Item #E44:** Provide electronic copies of draft study plans to Environmental Work Group members.

Status                      Environmental Study Plans were provided electronically to the Work Group participants.

### **Cumulative Task Force Status Report**

Steve Ford with DWR discussed the Cumulative Task Force status. He stated that DWR and both federal and state agencies responsible for fisheries issues met in late October to discuss approaches to addressing cumulative and interrelated impacts. Several proposals have been reviewed and the same folks will meet again on February 7<sup>th</sup>. Based on the outcome of that meeting, a task force meeting will be set in late February or early March. The task force will include other members of the Environmental Work Group. Steve suggested that the approach to address cumulative and interrelated issues be made a priority in the Environmental Work Group since the other work groups when approaching cumulative issues will use the results. Patrick Porgans asked to be added to the Cumulative Approach Task Force list and Steve Ford agreed to notify Patrick when a meeting date and location is set.

### **Critical Path Study Plans through Task Force**

Steve Ford asked that the group go through the Critical Path Study Plans listed on the agenda individually to make any changes needed with the goal of approving all of them today. He also told the participants that we would be discussing the Plenary Group's heartburn issues. The Facilitator explained that at the previous evening's Plenary Group meeting, participants were asked to identify their 'heartburn' issues with those study plans identified as "critical-path". Critical path study plans refers to those plans that either need two full years of data collection, have time-sensitive issues related to data collection, or will produce information needed for other study plans. Twenty-two critical path study plans were reviewed by the Plenary Group, including Environmental study plans SP-W1, SP-W2, SP-W6, SP-T2, SP-T4, SP-G1 and SP-G2. The Plenary Group participants identified heartburn issues with twelve of the twenty-two study plans and referred them back to the appropriate Work Groups for resolution. SP-W1, SP-W2, and SP-W6 had heartburn issues associated with them. The remaining Critical Path Study Plans that had no heartburn issues identified were placed on a consent calendar for approval at the February Plenary Group meeting. SP-T2, SP-T4, SP-G1 and SP-G2 were placed on the consent calendar. Once the Work Groups have resolved the heartburn issues identified, revised Study Plans will be provided to the Plenary Group participants and reviewed at the February Plenary Group meeting for inclusion on the consent calendar for approval. The Plenary Group heartburn issues as well as other critical path Study Plans were discussed as follows:

### ***Water Quality***

#### **SP-W1**

Sharon Stohrer of State Water Resources Control Board explained that she raised her heartburn issues at the Plenary Group because she was uncertain if all of the revisions that she had suggested had been included in the latest version of the study plan and therefore she was not ready to give approval until she could verify her revisions had been accepted. Steve Ford explained that the study plans distributed to participants electronically include the most recent changes made between the Work Group meeting and the Plenary Group meeting. Sharon indicated that the changes she had suggested had been included.

Ron Davis requested the addition of two or three sampling locations to the study plan to include Glen Pond where trout enter through a culvert to spawn. After some discussion about the potential project effects to spawning activity in Glen Creek and Glen Pond, the participants decided to add a data collection site at Glen Creek-pond tributary to the Diversion Pool. The discussion concluded with a consensus approval of study Plan W1 by the Environmental Work Group.

#### **SP-W6**

Mike Meinz explained the heartburn issue he raised at the Plenary Group meeting is a need to have consistency in language used to describe study area. For example, sometimes the term 'lower Feather River' is used but it is unclear what exactly is meant. The participants agreed that consistent use of language is important and agreed with the concept of a glossary of terms used during the Oroville Facilities Relicensing collaborative. Sharon Stohrer expressed her desire to have a continuously recording dissolved oxygen (DO) meter located at each temperature-monitoring site. Steve Ford and

other participants described their experiences with trying to maintain such meters and agreed that it would be difficult to keep a meter in place, primarily due to vandalism. Participants agreed that they would do spot checks for DO rather than try to maintain meters at each site. The monitoring reach will extend from the Fish Barrier Dam to Honcut Creek from September 1<sup>st</sup> through the end of December unless early findings indicate a need to extend the monitoring further downstream.

## ***Geomorphology***

### ***SP-G1***

No further comments. The Environmental Work Group gave an overall approval of this study plan.

### ***SP-G2***

Ron Davis asked if the study plan could extend to evaluating the quality of spawning gravels in Glen Creek. Bruce Ross with DWR said he would add Glen Creek to the study area. Ron added that he thought it was important to quantify the steelhead-spawning habitat in addition to the salmon-spawning habitat. Casar Blanco with USFWS asked if there would be a distinction between spawning areas and quality gravel areas. Bruce Ross explained that we would be compiling areas where the fish have been spawning in the past through data collection in the field and information from Fish and Game and adding it to the GIS atlas. The atlas will include aerial photos showing spawning areas and sampling points developed from the GIS. The Environmental Work Group agreed that with the discussed changes, G2 is approved.

## ***Terrestrial***

### ***SP-T2***

Ron Davis asked if there is another study that inventories the animal residents including the amphibians of concern in the wetlands. He explained that he is concerned about the use of some of the habitat and that there is a likelihood that reptiles of concern, particularly the giant garter snake are residing in this area.

Forest Service representatives stated that SP-T4 is a habitat assessment not a survey and that SP-T2 has to do with the actual species. The Forest Service explained that it is hard to manage habitat for species when you do not have a good idea of what species are using the habitat. It was recommended that when we do habitat assessments we complete sample surveys for the species.

Linnea Hanson, botanist for the Forest Service stated that she submitted her comments in a letter and they were not addressed. Her comments were discussed and revisions were made to SP-T2 to incorporate her suggestions. Linnea also offered to supply the authors with a USFS Pacific Southwest Region sensitive Plant List.

Cindy Roberts, wildlife biologist from Plumas National Forest, stated that Task 10 and 11 talk about mapping locations of sensitive species. She asked if there would be some target surveys for groups of species to get an idea of the species we are assessing. Jim Sherar with the consulting team mentioned that he would like to get a better sense of the level of effort that may be involved in gathering this information in terms of the habitat assessment while a representative of the State Water Contractors reminded the participants that we have to keep in mind how the studies relate to the relicensing of Oroville and how the results are going to be used in relicensing. Based on much discussion and a breakout caucus, Task 10 was modified to include the following: 1) "The survey crew will include staff qualified to identify Forest Service sensitive species.", and 2) "Sampling surveys would be conducted if project activities are found to affect sensitive species' habitat."

Discussions continued to focus on the appropriate level of effort for surveys with agreed upon language added to the document based on the discussions. The Work Group accepted SP-T2 with the changes discussed above.

### ***SP-T4***

No further comments. The Environmental Work Group gave an overall approval of this study plan.

### **Next Steps**

Steve Ford reminded the Environmental Work Group that three Task Force meetings have been scheduled. The February 13<sup>th</sup> Terrestrial Task Force meeting will cover T3/5, T9, T1, and T7. The February 14<sup>th</sup> Water Quality Task Force will cover W2, W3, W5, and W7. The March 11<sup>th</sup> Task Force meeting will cover the remaining Terrestrial and Water Quality study plans.

Steve described the Modeling Protocol Task Force formed at the previous evening's Plenary Group meeting and asked for a representative from the Environmental Work Group, preferably an agency representative, to volunteer to serve on the Task Force. Three people from the Environmental Work Group volunteered to share responsibility for Environmental Work Group representation on the Modeling Protocol Task Force: Casar Blanco, Sharon Stohrer and Eric Theiss.

### **Next Meeting**

A schedule including Work Group and Plenary Group meeting dates for 2002 was distributed to the participants. The facilitator explained that the Work Group dates are pending approval by each Work Group and she asked if any of the dates shown for the Environmental Work Group needed to be rescheduled. She added that the Engineering and Operations Work Group pointed out that the November meeting dates fall during the week of Thanksgiving so they suggested the entire block of November meetings be re-scheduled for the week before to avoid the holiday. She also explained that the February Plenary meeting has been moved to February 25<sup>th</sup>. The Environmental Work Group agreed to the 2002 meeting schedule and agreed that the next Environmental Work Group meeting would be:

Date: March 7, 2002

Time: 9:30 a.m. – 3:30p.m.

Location: Kelly Ridge Golf Course Meeting Room, 5131 Royal Oaks Drive, Oroville California

### **Agreements Made**

The Environmental Work Group agreed to approve Study Plans SP-W1, SP-W6, SP-G1, SP-G2, SP-T2 and SP-T4 for the Plenary Group meeting with the changes made in this meeting.

The Environmental Work Group agreed to the 2002 meeting schedule.

### **Action Items**

The following list of action items identified by the Environmental Work Group includes a description of the action, the participant responsible for the action and item status.

**Action Item #E45:** Create a glossary of terms for the project and define "boundary" as FERC boundary. Nan Nalder offered to provide a copy of the glossary used for Lewis River project.

**Responsible:** DWR/consulting team

**Due Date:** March 7, 2002